



**THE HISTORY CHANNEL® PRESENTS**  
**The Revolution: Path to World War**  
**Part 5 of a 13 part original series**

The American Revolution laid the foundation for the success of the United States, yet the viability of the nation was not always imminent and the quest for liberty was no simple endeavor. As the Colonists found themselves becoming increasingly independent, the fiercest and most powerful army in the world stood between them and a free, independent, sovereign America. Small skirmishes between colonists and representatives of the British throne escalated in 1775. In order to pacify what he viewed as a small rebellion, the King sent a contingent of Red Coats from the seemingly omnipotent British Army across the Atlantic Ocean. However, as the days and months progressed, the Red Coats, their military leaders and King George III himself eventually realized the ferocity, courage and collective will of the colonists they faced.

*The Revolution: Path to World War* expands the scope of the series beyond the colonies, taking the viewer to Paris, France to follow American statesman Benjamin Franklin. Descending on Paris with the hopes of gaining French support, Franklin encounters resistance from a reluctant French King who is skeptical of the Continental Army's ability. Meanwhile, back in the colonies, British General William Howe has outmaneuvered George Washington's troops at Chadd's Ford and is poised to take Philadelphia, the American capital. But to the north, another American general, Horatio Gates, has amassed an army large enough to defeat the diminished British forces at the Battle of Saratoga, regaining valuable land around the Hudson River. Will this victory offset Washington's loss and garner the support of the French?

**Curriculum Links**

*The Revolution: Path to War* would be useful for high school and middle school classes on United States History, Military History, European History, and Colonial History. Teachers may want to use clips from this series to animate their lesson plans and course units, or chose individual episodes from this series to highlight a particular chapter in the Revolutionary era. This documentary fulfills several National Standards guidelines as

outlined by the National Council for History Education including: (1) Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas and Institutions, (2) Conflict and Cooperation, (3) Patterns of Social and Political Interaction and (4) Comparative History of Major Developments.

### **Vocabulary**

Using the dictionary at [www.merriamwebster.com](http://www.merriamwebster.com), an internet resource such as [www.history.com](http://www.history.com), or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms:

Animus  
Anointment  
Chesapeake Bay  
Consternation  
Emissary

Guerilla  
League of Iroquois  
Opulence  
Upstart  
Victuals

### **Discussion Questions**

1. When Benjamin Franklin reached France, he found a nation that was deeply divided between opulence and poverty. In what ways did the situation in France resemble the one in America? How did the American Revolution influence France? (You may want to do some additional research on the French Revolution.)
2. Both American and British generals were convinced that the war was going to be over by Christmas. This was neither the first nor the last time that the length of a war has been underestimated. What specific events led to the prolonging of this particular war and why do you think generals so often make these miscalculations?
3. Rivers were crucial in each battle described in this episode. What roles did these rivers play in the war? Why was it so important to control these bodies of water?
4. People referred to Fort Ticonderoga as the “Gibraltar of North America.” What does this mean?
5. Why did British general Howe choose to conquer Philadelphia instead of traveling up the Hudson to support General Burgoyne? Is this a characteristic of any other military leaders we have come across?
6. How did Benjamin Franklin liken his tactics in France to a chess game? How did this strategy ultimately prevail?
7. How did British captain Patrick Ferguson’s regard for honor change the course of American history forever? Would you have done the same thing in his position?
8. Why do you think the British recruited Native Americans to join their cause? What incentives did the Indians have to join forces with the British? Is this the first time that non-natives have fought for the British?
9. What effect did the death of Jane McCrea have on Colonial troops?
10. What new battle-tactics did Daniel Morgan introduce to the Revolution? Who inspired these tactics?

## **Extended Activities**

### **Elder Statesman**

At the time of the American Revolution, the French felt great animosity towards the English. This did not assure French support of the colonists, however. Benjamin Franklin still faced the formidable task of trying to convince the French to support a group of revolutionaries. Imagine you are Ben Franklin, how would you convince the French to send supplies and reinforcements to the colonists? How would the French benefit from this support? How can you assure them that victory is imminent? Split in to groups of two, one of you playing the role of Franklin and the other the French king.

### **Propaganda Poster**

The American army needed all of the soldiers it could get. As we have seen throughout the series, colonists exercised all means necessary to convince young colonists to join forces with the Continental army. For this exercise, create a propaganda poster that cites the offenses of the British to inspire people to join your rebel cause. Be creative with your space, and make sure that you limit yourself to one page.

### **General Resources**

The Complete History of the American Revolution and the Revolutionary War:

[www.americanrevolution.com/Links.htm](http://www.americanrevolution.com/Links.htm)

Emory University's website with primary sources including documents, paintings and speeches regarding the American Revolution:

<http://www.law.emory.edu/FEDERAL/conpict.html#const>

Maps from the Revolutionary War era:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/armhtml/armhome.html>

Military Resources on the American Revolution including digitized photographs of original paintings and drawings of battles:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/american-revolution/pictures/index.html>

### **Online Resources for *Path to World War***

Detailed history about the Battle of Saratoga:

<http://www.saratoga.org/battle1777>

Pictures of the Brandywine Battlefield and discussion of the events surrounding the battle:

<http://www.ushistory.org/brandywine/thestory.htm>

<http://www.chaddsfordhistory.org/history/battle.htm>

Extensive descriptions of Benjamin Franklin's life as statesman, with particular emphasis on his famous visit to France:

<http://www.fi.edu/franklin>

**Books and other Resources for *Path to World War***

Brands, H.W. *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*. Anchor, 2002.

Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Franklin, Benjamin. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Dover Publications, 1996.

Headley, J.T. *Washington and His Generals*. Kessinger Publications, 2004.

Mowday, Bruce. *September 11, 1777: Washington's Defeat at Brandywine Dooms Philadelphia*. White Mane Publishing, 2002.

Murray Stewart. *The Honor of Command: General Burgoyne's Saratoga Campaign*. Past, 1998.

Schiff, Stacy. *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of a Nation*. Henry Holt, 2005.